

extending at least as far east as Iran and Kazakhstan. It is a gregarious endoparasitoid of the pupae (within the puparium) of a range of cyclorrhaphan Diptera although records from tachinids are rare with this appearing to be the first from *Sturmia bella*.

It is almost certain that the puparia originated from pupae of *Aglais urtica* L., several of which were suspended from the eaves of the bungalow almost directly above the collection site. The fly and voucher specimens of the wasps are deposited at the Natural History Museum. I thank the following staff at the Natural History Museum, London: Howard Mendel (Collections Manager) for arranging identification of the specimens; David Notton for identification and helpful information on *T. nigra*; Nigel Wyatt for identification and helpful information on *S. bella*.— DAVID R. NASH, 3 Church Lane, Brantham, Suffolk CO11 1PU.

### ***Conistra rubiginea* (D.&S.) (Lep.: Noctuidae): A newcomer to Kent**

Seven examples of *Conistra rubiginea* were noted at my garden mv light in early spring 2005 – on 21.iii(2), 23.iii, 27.iii, 1.iv, 2.iv and 24.iv. This is a species apparently not recorded for Kent until 2002, when several specimens were seen at scattered locations in West Kent (VC 16) including Shorne Woods, near Gravesend and Bexley (Ferguson, 2004. *Kent Moth Report*. Butterfly Conservation).

Barrett (1900. *The Lepidoptera of the British Islands*. VI) regarded the moth as being very scarce, occasionally taken in Surrey and Sussex, and elsewhere in southern England, but it is not mentioned for Kent. Collins (1997. *The Larger Moths of Surrey*) indicates that the moth's stronghold comprises the woods and heaths of the north-west of the county, but notes significantly that recently increased sightings have been observed in the East and suggests that they may represent a trend to extension of range.

Thus, after two hundred years' absence from Kent it appears that the extension of range in Surrey suggested by Collins has progressed further eastwards into West Kent. The Dartford specimens of 2005 at least, judging from the scattered sightings over a wider area of West Kent since 2002, plus the pattern and number of *C. rubiginea* observed at my garden mv light in an area of mixed woodland, parkland and heath, are representatives of a successful local colonisation.— B. K. WEST, 36 Briar Road, Dartford, Kent DA5 2HW.

### **A new site for *Melitaea arduinna* (Esper) (Lep.: Nymphalidae) in Bulgaria**

Abadjiev (2001. *An Atlas of the Distribution of the Butterflies in Bulgaria*. Pensoft.) lists only three widely separated localities for *Melitaea arduinna* in Bulgaria: Vrashka Chuka in the extreme north-west, Sboryanovo in the north-east, and Poda near Burgas in the south-east. It is not clear which, if any, of these populations are still extant. In May 2004, while on holiday in the Primorsko area of the southern Black Sea coast, I stumbled across a further colony of this elusive species on a low

cliff-top just to the south of the small resort of Kiten. The habitat was unexceptional, flowery grassland with some scrub, and the butterflies seemed to be confined to a remarkably small area. As I made this discovery at the end of my holiday, I was not able to investigate further south along the coast, but I would suggest that this might reveal further populations. Other *Melitaeinae* present in the vicinity were *M. cinxia* (L), *M. phoebe* (D&S), *M. didyma* (Esper), *M. trivia* (D&S) and *Euphydryas aurinia* (Rottemburg).

Owing to an over enthusiastic use of the semicolon, Tolman (1997. *Collins Field Guide – Butterflies of Britain and Europe*. HarperCollins.) gives the impression of five distinct localities for *M. arduinna*, but Sboryanovo is a locality in the Ludogorie region of Bulgaria and Kula is the nearest town to the Vrashka Chuka (or Vrushka Tchuka) locality, so in reality he names only the same three sites mentioned by Abadjiev (*op.cit.*). Tolman gives the altitudinal range of the species as 500-1500m, but both the Kiten and Burgas colonies are or were at sea-level.

I am indebted to Stanislav Abadjiev for suggesting the publication of this record after viewing a photograph I took of one of the *M. arduinna*.— MICHAEL J. SKELTON, 42 Grosvenor Gardens, Bournemouth BH1 4HH.

### ***Phyllonorycter ulicicolella* (Stt.) (Lep:Gracillariidae) – a first description of the larva**

On 27 March 2005, I examined a gorse *Ulex europaeus* bush on the edge of a small copse close to my house at Fleet, Hampshire and found a mine of *P. ulicicolella* in the bark, near to the shoot tip. The mine extended some 15 mm in length from the base of the spine towards the tip. It can be seen (Fig. 1) that the upper end of the mine is relatively clear; the discolouration of the bottom of the mine is due to frass accumulation. There is also a 'window' effect (seen at the top of the mine) where the larva has eaten through to the outer epidermis in places.

Discussion with other lepidopterists suggests that the mine is, evidently, rarely seen and as far as I am able to ascertain the larva is undescribed in the British entomological literature. The opportunity is therefore taken to plug that gap.

The fully fed larva (Fig. 2) is 3 mm long, almost transparent and a pale lemon colour in life and the thoracic legs have pale black rings. It has the typical *Phyllonorycter* head structure (Figs 2 and 3), light brown, with darker edges, but few distinguishing features on its body. The gut can be seen through the body wall. When the specimen was preserved in isopropyl alcohol it lost its colour.

I hope that this note will encourage others to search for this rarely seen miner. Care must be taken in identification as the spines of Gorse may show browning, which could lead to incorrect determinations. Look particularly for the discolouration of the spine, with a clear area towards the tip. I am grateful to Dr. Willem Ellis (Amsterdam) for his help in photographing the larva.— ROB EDMUNDS, 32 Woodcote Green, Fleet, Hampshire GU51 4EY (E-mail: r.edmunds@ntlworld.com).